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Connecticut General Assembly  
Committee on Children  
c/o Elizabeth Giannaros  
Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

February 19, 2014

RE: RAISED BILL 43/LCO NO. 472: AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO  
THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES STATUTES

Dear Committee Members:

Connecticut Association of Foster & Adoptive Parents, Inc. ("CAFAP")  
opposes Raised Bill 43 and asks that each committee member vote to defeat it.

CAFAP supports foster and adoptive parents and relative caregivers statewide through contract and direct funding from Department of Children and Families (DCF). Although CAFAP works closely with the DCF in many ways on both an individual family education and support as well as regionally across the state on service delivery improvement initiatives, we oppose this particular legislative proposal.

As written, Raised Bill 43 (current Section 5) is financially punitive to families who agree, at DCF's vigorous urging, to accept into their homes children with physical disabilities who would otherwise be institutionalized at significant taxpayer expense. Moreover, the proposal countermands the state's proclaimed public policy of providing "family homes" as opposed to congregate care settings for children and youth committed to DCF custody.

How many loving adults who own a home and would otherwise agree to devote love, energy, time and care to a severely disabled child will in addition agree to bear the financial expense of paying off the costs of adding significant modifications to their home? Why should the state of Connecticut be justified in asking these individuals to pay for necessary modifications to their homes in order to save the taxpayers the expense of keeping caring for these children in costlier settings? What happens when a devoted family loses a child to a needed higher level of care, or a reunification with long lost relatives, or the unfortunate possibility of dying from a medical condition? Which social worker decides who must pay? How easy will it be for a family to sell a home that has

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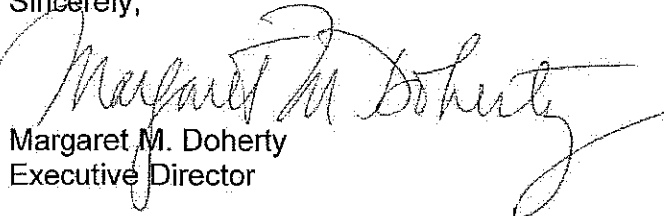
been modified to care for a specific child in accordance with DCF specifications? How does the state plan to try to recruit devoted caregivers while exposing these families to such financial hardship? These complicated questions and many others have not been addressed in this legislation.

The administration claims that requirements of this proposal will only be used for significant modifications and "very rarely." This pledge is not statutorily based and leaves wide open room for individual DCF staff decisions as to when and/or how these taxpayer expenses will be repaid by home owners.

Connecticut families should not bear the financial burden of reducing taxpayer expenses for caring for the neediest of children entrusted to DCF's care.

Please vote to defeat Raised Bill 43. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Margaret M. Doherty  
Executive Director